

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated May 31, 2005. Claims 1, 2 and 4 to 16 remain pending in the application, with Claims 25 to 43 having been cancelled herein. Claims 1, 7 and 12 are the independent claims herein. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

The specification was objected to for an informality that has been attended to by amendment. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 4, 6, 9, 11, 14 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, and Claims 5, 6, 10, 11, 15 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Without conceding the correctness of the rejections, the claims have nonetheless been amended based on the Examiner's interpretation given in the Office Action. Thus, each of the claims is believed to be fully described in the specification and are believed to be clear to those skilled in the art. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 112, first and second paragraph rejections are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 4 to 16 and 35 to 43 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,383,129 (Farrell). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

The present invention concerns calculating a charge for maintaining image processing apparatuses in accordance with maintenance agreements for each of a plurality of image forming apparatuses. According to the invention, information is stored in a memory for a variety of charge amounts per paper sheet to be output by each of the image forming apparatuses, in accordance with types of maintenance agreements and a content of services by a serviceman of the image forming apparatuses. To determine the charge, a number of printed paper sheets output by any one of the image forming apparatuses is

received, and a payable amount is calculated based on (i) the number of printed paper sheets and (ii) the charge amount of the variety of charge amounts stored in the memory in correspondence with the image forming apparatus from which the number of printed paper sheets is received. As a result, the invention provides a way to determine how much to charge a customer for maintaining an image forming apparatus (such as a network copier) based on how much the copy machine is used.

Turning to specific claim language, amended independent Claim 1 is directed to an information processing system for managing plural types of maintenance agreements relating to image forming apparatuses, comprising a receiver that receives information of a number of printed paper sheets output by any one of the image forming apparatuses via a communication path, a memory that stores a variety of charge amounts per paper sheet to be output by each of the image forming apparatuses, in accordance with the types of maintenance agreements of a content of services by a serviceman of the image forming apparatuses, corresponding to each of the image forming apparatuses, and a calculation section that calculates a payable amount on the basis of (i) the number of printed paper sheets received by the receiver and (ii) a charge amount of the variety of charge amounts stored in the memory in correspondence with the image forming apparatus from which the number of printed paper sheets is received.

Amended independent Claims 7 and 12 are method and computer medium claims, respectively, that substantially correspond to Claim 1.

The applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of the present invention, and in particular is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of receiving information of a number of printed sheets by an image processing apparatus, and calculating a payable amount based on (i) the number of printed paper sheets received

and (ii) a charge amount of a variety of charge amounts stored in a memory in correspondence with maintenance agreements and a content of services provided by a serviceman of the image forming apparatuses.

Farrell is merely seen to disclose a method of estimating a cost of printing material used to print a job on a printing apparatus. According to the method, a cost of the printing materials is stored in a memory. A first quantity of the printing materials to be used in printing a job is selected, and based on the selection of the first printing materials, a cost of the job is determined. Thus, Farrell merely determines the cost of outputting a print job, but discloses nothing about determining a cost of a maintenance agreement for maintaining the apparatus, much less that the cost is determined based on a received number of printed sheets. Accordingly, the claimed invention is believed to be non-obviously different from Farrell.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, CA office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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